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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Angola

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1294 (2000) of 13 April 2000, in which the Council, inter alia, reaffirmed that a continued presence of the United Nations in Angola could contribute to the promotion of peace, national reconciliation, human rights and regional security, and extended the mandate of the United Nations Office in Angola for a period of six months until 15 October 2000. By that resolution, the Council requested me to submit to it every three months a report on developments in Angola, including recommendations about additional measures the Council might consider to promote the peace process in that country. The present report provides an update of the situation since my previous report, of 12 July 2000 (S/2000/678).

II. Political developments

2. During the period under review, the overall situation in Angola has remained unstable. The União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) led by Jonas Savimbi has continued to carry out guerrilla activities in several localities, exacerbating the already alarming humanitarian situation. On 28 August, President José Eduardo dos Santos announced to the press that he had been informed by the general staff of the Angolan Armed Forces that about 10,000 UNITA soldiers had so far surrendered to the Government. Meanwhile, the spillover of the conflict across the borders to Zambia and Namibia has complicated relations between Angola and Zambia and has negatively affected the socio-economic and humanitarian situation in both Zambia and Namibia. However, a recent visit to Angola by the Commander of the Zambian armed forces at the invitation of the Chief of General Staff of the Angolan Armed Forces seemed to have helped to dissipate some of the misunderstandings between the two countries. Moreover, the Under-Secretary-General and Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa, Ibrahim Gambari, went on a mission to Namibia and Zambia in August to consult with senior officials and the United Nations offices there with a view to ascertaining the extent of the security, socio-economic and humanitarian problems arising from the Angolan war on the two neighbouring countries and make appropriate recommendations for responding to them.

3. Debate on whether a dialogue between the Government and UNITA should be resumed has continued. The leaders of some political parties believe that the Government is not giving serious attention to appeals from civil society, particularly the Church, for a dialogue which would include UNITA. The Minister for Territorial Administration and former head of the government delegation to the Joint Commission told the press on 19 July that UNITA should return to the peace process to complete its outstanding tasks under the Lusaka Protocol because the Government had already finished its part of the agreement.

4. A congress for peace (Pro Pace) that was convened in Luanda from 18 to 21 July brought together some 300 participants from civil society, Church groups, opposition parties, the Government and non-governmental organizations. The congress issued a communiqué articulating a message of democracy, tolerance, non-violence, human rights, dialogue and reconciliation, and called for a ceasefire as a first step towards ending the protracted civil war in Angola. The

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congress further called for the free movement of people, as well as the promotion of a national dialogue in which persons from all segments of society could participate in the search for peace and national reconciliation. Although some political groups believe that the offer made by President dos Santos to pardon Mr. Savimbi gives a window of opportunity for peace talks, the UNITA leader is alleged to have rejected it as an attempt to deflect pressure for an all-inclusive dialogue.

5. As a follow-up to the congress, the Church in Angola has been reported to be planning to meet Mr. Savimbi inside the country to seek his views on how to resolve the conflict. The Church is also seeking clearance from the Government, including security guarantees for such a meeting. In the meantime, the Secretary-General of UNITA has stated that, although his movement was ready to examine all possible ways of resolving the Angolan conflict peacefully, it would not disarm as long as mutual confidence did not exist between the two warring parties. He has also indicated acceptance by UNITA of an all-inclusive dialogue. On his part, the Secretary-General of the ruling Movimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola (MPLA) has stated that dialogue should not be misconstrued as renegotiation and has reiterated that the Government would not heed appeals for dialogue with Mr. Savimbi. The interdenominational Committee for Peace in Angola met on 31 August to begin a series of workshops on peace. During the meeting, participants examined the shortcomings of the Bicesse Accords and the Lusaka Protocol and emphasized the need for a culture of peace, tolerance and dialogue.

6. Six opposition political parties represented in Parliament, including some individual UNITA members, met in Luanda from 8 to 10 August to create a common front in preparation for the upcoming general elections, tentatively scheduled for the second half of 2001. They appealed for an immediate ceasefire to create a conducive climate for an all-inclusive dialogue. They also discussed the need for the creation of an independent electoral commission, the dissolution of Parliament at the end of its current mandate in October 2000 and the formation of a constituent assembly and a transitional government to run the country until elections are held. At a subsequent meeting on 5 September, with the participation of parties not represented in Parliament, President dos Santos was urged to organize a national debate on how to end the war in the country. The ruling MPLA has rejected any call for the dissolution of Parliament and the creation of a constituent assembly. According to its Secretary-General, the creation of a constituent assembly would be contrary to the will of the people as expressed in the 1992 elections and would lack legitimacy. With reference to a transitional government, he stated that a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation already existed and that the idea proposed had been tried after the Alvor Agreement in 1975 but had led to anarchy and civil war.

7. During a recent visit to Cabinda Province, President dos Santos indicated that dialogue could be re-established with the separatist movement, the Frente para a Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda (FLEC), as soon as there is effective peace in the country. One of the leaders of FLEC stated that there should be no linkage between the search for a solution of the Cabindan question and the conflict in the rest of Angola. Three Portuguese nationals and one Angolan captured on 24 May 2000 by FLEC are still being held hostage.

8. On 29 July, the members of the new sanctions monitoring mechanism established under Security Council resolution 1295 (2000) and chaired by Ambassador Juan Larrain visited Angola. During their stay in the country which lasted until 5 August, they met with several ministers, including those for External Relations, Defence and Geology and Mines. The experts also held useful discussions with senior officials in State corporations before travelling to other countries in southern Africa.

9. More recently, the new Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 864 (1993) concerning the situation in Angola, Ambassador Paul Heinbecker of Canada, arrived in Luanda on 21 September. During his two-day visit, Mr. Heinbecker was received by President dos Santos. He also met with the Ministers for External Affairs, Defence, Petroleum, Geology and Mines, and the Governor of the Central Bank. His consultations with senior government officials and relevant organizations were related to the situation in Angola, the impact of the sanctions against UNITA and additional measures needed to strengthen the implementation of the sanctions regime. Soon thereafter, on 30 September, my new Representative in Angola and Head of the United Nations Office in Angola, Mr. Mussagy Jeichande, arrived in Luanda to assume his duties.

III. Military situation

10. UNITA fighters were reported to have infiltrated government-controlled areas to carry out acts of sabotage. On 7 August, they attacked the locality of Catete, 60 kilometres east of the Angolan capital, killing civilians and destroying government buildings. In addition to the hit-and-run tactics against military objectives, UNITA guerrillas are reported to be carrying out ambushes and attacks on civilian convoys in desperate attempts to get food, medicine and fuel supplies.

11. Large contingents of government troops have reportedly been deployed to cities such as Benguela, Huambo, Malange and Soyo to secure important strategic installations and objectives. Nevertheless, UNITA guerrilla forces are reported to have continued to make sporadic attacks on some diamond-mining localities in the north-eastern region of the country. They have also reportedly opened a corridor in the region to move supplies from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

12. Government troops have continued their operations to pursue the rebels from the central highlands through Moxico Province in the eastern region to the border with Zambia. The Angolan Vice-Minister for Defence told Parliament recently that the strategy of the Government was to destroy the UNITA military command posts, take control of the borders and withdraw the population from areas still under UNITA control. In the meantime, government operations along the Zambian and Namibian borders have reportedly created security concerns in the two countries. In his address to the media at the end of the visit to Angola of President Laurent-Désiré Kabila, on 25 September 2000, President dos Santos said, inter alia, that he is confident that the Angolan Armed Forces will be successful in eliminating the last pockets of resistance offered by Savimbi's "armed bandits". Following a series of complaints, a delegation of Angolan Parliamentarians recently visited Namibia and decision was made to withdraw some of the Angolan troops stationed in the northern Kavango region of Namibia.

13. Even though the presence of UNITA rebels has not been reported in Cabinda Province, the Government is said to have deployed about 6,000 soldiers and police there to face the separatist threat posed by FLEC. Government sources have affirmed that regular appeals to the rebel forces of UNITA and FLEC to abandon the military option, and the promise of President dos Santos to grant them amnesty, have been bearing fruit.

IV. Human rights aspects

14. The Government has signed and ratified over 20 human rights and humanitarian law treaties. Of a total of 166 articles in the Angolan Constitution, 34 are devoted to human rights. On 25 July, the Angolan National Assembly approved the ratification of the 1997 Ottawa Convention banning the production and use of landmines. The Government has invited the United Nations, through the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Office in Angola, to contribute to its efforts to meet its legal obligations to respect the human rights of all its citizens.

15. The Human Rights Division of the United Nations Office in Angola facilitates incremental and positive changes in the human rights situation in Angola. The efforts to facilitate a change in perspective — so that human rights work is no longer seen as a clandestine activity but as a normal vehicle for positive and incremental social change — are beginning to show results. The Division works to facilitate the creation of a Government/State process and individual processes within institutions to identify human rights problems and to produce plans with concrete measurable objectives to overcome those problems.

16. During the period under review, significant actions were taken by the Government to improve the human rights situation. Salaries for magistrates were increased in an attempt to provide a dignified and appropriate remuneration. Two of nine municipal courts in Luanda began rehabilitation work with the support of the municipal administrator. A recent study by a Church group with support from the Human Rights Division in one of the largest shanty towns in Luanda confirmed that citizens turned to private vigilante justice more frequently than to accepted forms of conflict resolution such as the use of a community elder or religious authority and least frequently to the justice system. A survey of public opinion done by an Angola research institute in cooperation with the Prosecutor General's Office and a local non-governmental organization with the support of the Human Rights Division indicated that well over

65 per cent the population surveyed knew their rights but indicated a lack of confidence in the ability of government institutions to respect such rights.

17. Those results demonstrate that the justice system suffers from structural weaknesses as well as insufficient reach, credibility and capacity to respond effectively to human rights violations. Less than 5 per cent of Angola's municipalities have a fully functioning justice system including a municipal court. The Human Rights Division continued to contribute to initiatives and efforts of various actors in the Angolan justice system to improve the situation by expanding the capacity of the system to deliver justice through computerization, training and other support.

18. The human rights component of the United Nations Office in Angola, with the cooperation of the non-governmental organization Trocaire, has helped to extend the work of Angola's first public interest litigation group to four provinces in addition to Luanda. The group uses and thereby strengthens the justice system by advocating for various aggrieved individuals (for example, in respect of property and liberty rights). The Angolan Bar Association, in cooperation with the police and the Prosecutor's Office, has initiated a programme by which a law graduate will be placed in police stations in the most populous neighbourhoods of Luanda in order to strengthen respect for human rights. A few projects by Angolan non-governmental organizations and Church groups to contribute to capacity-building and improved prison conditions have also led to significant improvements.

19. Freedom of expression continues to be a controversial and complex question in Angola. Since July, the issue has been a subject of heated debate following the submission of a new draft law for public comment by the President of Angola. The draft law continues to protect the President from criticism that could be considered defamatory and enlarges the State's administrative and penal control over journalists and the media. National associations of journalists and international human rights organizations have opposed the draft law.

20. The public discussion launched by the President and the ensuing debates have opened the space for independent voices of civil society. There are other signs of a growing space for freedom of expression. The congress on ways to achieve peace (Pro Pace), organized in mid-July as an initiative of the Catholic Church, served as an arena for independent and critical contributions and opinions from civil society (see para. 4 above). During the congress, Rádio Ecclesia broadcast via short wave throughout the country. This was the first Angolan non-governmental signal to reach the entire country, with the support of the Human Rights Division and Trocaire. Every Saturday, the National Radio and Radio Ecclesia now broadcast lively discussions on issues relevant to the political life of the country, in which listeners can intervene directly. At least two radio programmes centre on questions of human rights and their exercise or defence.

21. Human rights violations related directly to the conflict have created one of the largest forced relocations: about 2.7 million persons at the end of July, with millions of others affected by the war. This has in part been caused by the use of landmines, targeting of civilians and the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force. The number of alleged violations related to the conflict during the reporting period has been significant. UNITA attacks on civilian targets have been systematic. Notable was the alleged UNITA attack on the orphanage in the province of Huambo on 10 July, which resulted in the murder of one child and the abduction of 21 minors. There were numerous allegations of UNITA abduction of children, to use them as porters and eventually to force them into military service.

22. Alleged violations by the Angolan Armed Forces and the national police often relate to individual actions outside existing law and disciplinary rules. The threat and use of violence often accompany actions committed by State actors in violation of the law. Angola's justice institutions do not have the capacity or territorial coverage to investigate and properly respond to violations. In this context, the recent project of the armed forces to train military trainers in human rights, international humanitarian law and the rule of law in a democratic state is welcome. The project includes the reinforcement of mechanisms to follow up on reported cases of abuse. The project receives the support of the Human Rights Division.

23. A large effort will be required from the Government, with the assistance of the international community, to provide for basic rights such as health, education and access to justice. This is especially needed in areas formerly occupied by UNITA. The recently agreed staff-monitored programme of the

International Monetary Fund (IMF) provides for an audit of the revenues obtained from oil and diamond sectors and calls for a trebling of spending for health and education. The Government's poverty reduction strategy paper, now being drafted, will indicate whether this shift is to be made.

V. Humanitarian situation

24. The humanitarian situation in Angola remained serious during the reporting period. As in previous months, conflict-related displacement continued with new movements occurring in 13 provinces. The highest concentrations of new influxes were in the hard-hit Provinces of Bié, Lunda Sul and Moxico. At-risk populations experienced further deterioration in their status as inflationary pressures in the economy led to a rise in the price of basic commodities. Fluctuations in local labour and agricultural markets in some provincial capitals also led to increasing destitution. In a positive development, the Government of Angola continued to relocate populations living in unsustainable camps and transit centres to new resettlement sites. The introduction by the Government of minimum operational standards for resettlement and return, specifying both preconditions and targets, was a major step forward, establishing a clear and principled framework for future relocations.

25. In accordance with the recommendations made in the rapid assessment of critical needs, serious efforts were made to close poorly managed transit centres. At Caala, 14 of 15 transit centres were closed during August. Humanitarian agencies estimate that approximately 3,000 people are now resettled at a new site at Cassoco and 5,000 persons at Cantão Pahula. In July and August, internally displaced persons living in sub-standard shelters at Uige and Negage were relocated to more suitable areas within Uige Province. In Malange, the provincial government confirmed that 1,300 internally displaced persons currently living in unstable conditions in Camabole camp near Cambondo would be transferred to another site. In addition, two sub-standard transit centres at Malange are scheduled for closure in the near future.

26. In addition to relocations from transit centres, 14,000 displaced persons were resettled from Malange to Cangandala where they are receiving humanitarian assistance provided by agencies. In Huila Province, 1,000 displaced persons are scheduled for resettlement to areas south of Matala. In Moxico Province, local authorities are preparing to relocate populations living in camps for internally displaced persons inside Luena to safe resettlement areas within the city's security perimeter.

27. Although the pace of resettlement initiatives increased during the period, the majority of displaced populations in the country, whether living in transit centres, camps or among resident communities, do not yet have access to adequate agricultural land. Most displaced persons continue to survive through a combination of kinship exchange, petty-commodity production, selling of charcoal and firewood, food preparation and brewing. Assets, including emergency items provided by aid agencies, are routinely exchanged or sold as part of the coping strategies of the populations.

28. In line with the Government's goal to promote agricultural self-reliance, a nationwide campaign to distribute agricultural inputs for internally displaced persons with land was organized during July and August. The campaign is a humanitarian priority in view of the World Food Programme's (WFP) intention to modify its distribution strategy following the harvest of April 2001. The new WFP strategy aims to improve targeting of the most vulnerable and to support transition activities through food-for-work and other programmes.

29. Under the coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), humanitarian agencies plan to provide approximately 394,000 families with agricultural inputs, including about 178,000 tons of seeds and 860,000 tool kits, during September and October. In addition, some provincial governments are making significant progress in identifying land for distribution to vulnerable populations. In Malange, for example, more than 4,580 hectares have been recently made available to 7,162 displaced families. In Moxico, more than 2,490 hectares has been allocated to 4,975 displaced families, while in Cuando Cubango, 4,000 hectares has been distributed to 3,555 families. Despite these positive steps, the food security of war-affected populations continues to be at risk owing to persistent insecurity and displacement.

30. Despite earlier problems with the WFP food pipeline, all WFP food requirements are now covered until the end of November 2000. The WFP pipeline

improved considerably in July following several commodity contributions. The number of planned beneficiaries increased by 15 per cent in August because of new influxes in Kwanza Sul, Malange and Zaire Provinces. Shortfalls continue to exist, however, for sugar and corn soya blend, both used in nutrition programmes.

31. Consistent with seasonal trends, the nutrition situation improved in several areas including Ganda, Malange, Negage and Uige. High levels of malnutrition were reported in the Dokota district of Benguela, Cambambe camp in Bengo, and areas throughout Moxico Province. The high rates are primarily due to new influxes of at-risk populations. In Cambambe, agencies reported that three to five children per day were dying during August from malnutrition, related diseases and lack of medicine. Interventions are currently hampered by a severe lack of funding.

32. The final round of the national immunization days against polio was conducted during the third week of August. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported that approximately 3 million children were vaccinated against the disease during the campaign. Insecurity and logistical constraints, however, prevented access to at least 40 municipalities, most located in the Provinces of Cuando Cubango, Malange, Moxico and Uige. During August, meningitis outbreaks were reported in the Provinces of Benguela and Bie. Rapid interventions and ongoing monitoring prevented the disease from reaching epidemic levels in both areas.

33. The total number of internally displaced persons reported in the country since January 1998 increased to more than 2.7 million by the end of August. Approximately 1.1 million of the internally displaced persons have been registered to receive assistance by humanitarian organizations. During the period under review, approximately 59,000 persons have been uprooted in 13 provinces, the largest movements occurring in Benguela, Bie, Lunda Sul, Huambo and Uige. In Kuito, humanitarian agencies confirmed the presence of approximately 7,000 new internally displaced persons in the city during August. Approximately 2,500 new internally displaced persons have been reported in Luena and 7,000 in Saurimo during the last two months.

34. United Nations agencies made significant efforts to assess humanitarian conditions in areas where State administration was recently restored, including Cacuso, Caliamamo, Cuvelai, Golungo Alto, Luau, Songo and Tchipompo. However, the provision of humanitarian assistance in some of these locations continues to be hampered by insecurity and limited logistics. Owing to the lack of security guarantees and threats from armed groups, populations living in unsafe areas remain out of reach for humanitarian agencies, particularly populations living along the eastern and southern borders.

35. In a major effort to improve humanitarian coverage, United Nations agencies have identified newly administered areas in 13 provinces where security assessments will be conducted as a matter of priority during the next few months. If appropriate, comprehensive humanitarian needs surveys will be undertaken by inter-agency technical teams following these security assessments. Road access remains restricted, with only coastal roads and routes within the security perimeters of major provincial cities useable by humanitarian agencies. Road links between provincial capitals remain insecure in the central and eastern parts of the country. As in previous months, more than 70 per cent of all humanitarian aid is transported by air owing to restricted surface routes. The airstrip at Kuito, where more than 120,000 people depend on humanitarian assistance to survive, remains in extremely poor condition and is likely to become unusable in the upcoming rainy season. WFP has increased warehousing capacity in the city to 6,400 tons so as to ensure that contingency stocks are available once the rains begin.

36. In a major step forward, the Government finalized a national Plan of Emergency Action with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. The Plan, which identifies concrete strategies for six sectors and was approved in August, is designed to form the framework for humanitarian interventions during the second half of 2000. The Plan includes a new nationwide water and sanitation emergency programme and a multifaceted programme for protection of vulnerable groups. During September, provincial emergency plans, based on the national framework and incorporating other initiatives, were supposed to have been drafted under Government leadership. These provincial plans, which will outline concrete steps for each humanitarian sector, are expected to form the basis for the 2001 consolidated inter-agency appeal.

VI. Socio-economic situation

37. The consequences of the prolonged conflict in Angola bring to the forefront many critical development problems and challenges which affect the achievement of the fundamental objectives of sustainable human development. In spite of the constraining context, assistance continued to be rendered to the Government to help it address the serious humanitarian and development crises facing the country.

38. The economy has continued to face serious macroeconomic instability, with a 125.69 per cent accumulated inflation rate at the end of June and price variations of 7.72 per cent, implying significant erosion of the purchasing power of Angolans and greater poverty. The grave macroeconomic environment prompted the Government to reach an agreement with the World Bank and IMF on a staff-monitored programme until the end of the year, to be followed by a full structural adjustment programme.

39. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continued to provide support to the capacity-building of government institutions, particularly the Ministry of Social Assistance and Reintegration, for the coordination of humanitarian assistance. Support also continued to be rendered to mine-action activities critical for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and especially the movement of internally displaced persons. Concern with the insufficiency of reliable and updated social and economic statistical data, particularly with regard to the war-affected populations and areas, led UNDP to commission studies focusing on aspects fundamental for the achievement of the goal of sustainable human development, namely the impact of HIV/AIDS on the war-affected population, particularly the internally displaced persons; the impact of the internally displaced persons on the environment; the impact of the internally displaced persons on local government structures; and the impact of population movements on the overall structure of Angolan society. The information will be useful for strengthening the national response to the serious situation of the internally displaced persons and the definition of policies to improve the living conditions of the war-affected populations.

40. Sustained support to poverty reduction measures was reinforced through the recent UNDP commitment to collaborate closely with the World Bank to assist the Government in preparing a poverty reduction strategy paper. Poverty has become endemic, with some 78 per cent of the rural population and 40 per cent of urban dwellers living below the poverty line. The poverty reduction strategy paper, part of the staff monitored programme package, is considered by the Government to be an essential component of its policy towards poverty reduction and macroeconomic reform.

41. Gender-related activities concentrated on supporting national preparations for participation in the special session of the General Assembly held in New York in June 2000 to conduct a five-year review of the Beijing Conference. The main challenge was helping to ensure a participatory process involving a broad range of women's organizations as well as promoting collaborative dialogue between civil society and the Government, particularly the Ministry of Family and the Promotion of Women.

VII. Observations

42. As I have stated on a number of previous occasions, UNITA bears primary responsibility for the resumption of the war in Angola by its failure to comply with its commitments under the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex), particularly its refusal to demilitarize and to permit the extension of State administration throughout the country.

43. Despite growing pressure from civil society, particularly Church groups, for a political settlement of the conflict, fighting is continuing with devastating effects on the population. Government forces have made significant progress in eroding the conventional war capability of UNITA, which is resorting increasingly to guerrilla-type operations in many areas in the pursuit of its aim to make the country ungovernable. I am concerned that the situation appears to be entering a new phase of political and military impasse. If the present trend continues, the situation in Angola could worsen the security and humanitarian problems especially in the border regions of the neighbouring countries Namibia and Zambia and threaten further the peace and security of the subregion as a whole.

44. The quest for national reconciliation should be broad-based and seek to overcome the enmity and mistrust which has been reinforced by hostility and violence. A genuine process of national reconciliation

can be initiated and enhanced by building and developing, in partnership with civil society, the Government's institutional capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights, the provision of justice and security, and the improvement of the living conditions of the people of Angola. In this regard, I welcome the recent statement by President dos Santos that "dialogue would be pursued with those who embrace peace, recognize the legitimate authority of the country and wish to contribute to the consolidation of democracy, reconstruction and development of Angola".

45. I also welcome the encouraging signs that the Government is recognizing the need to ensure respect for human rights and that it is developing its institutional capacity to that end in cooperation with the United Nations. The newly appointed Head of the United Nations Office in Angola and my Representative in Angola, Mussagy Jeichande, assumed his duties at the end of September. Under his leadership, the Office's direct contacts with the leadership in Angola will be reactivated and the ability of the Office to implement its mandate will be enhanced.

46. Finally, despite the absence of a real breakthrough and the frustrations over the slow progress towards a peaceful resolution of the situation in Angola, the United Nations Office in Angola continues to play an essential role in providing assistance to the Government in the area of human rights capacity-building, as well as in helping to mobilize humanitarian support from the international community. Its presence also underlines the continuing commitment of the international community to the cause of peace, stability and prosperity in Angola. I would therefore like to recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the United Nations Office in Angola for a further six-month period, until 15 April 2001.